

Environmental Checklist Form

<b>1. Project title:</b> Basin Plan Amendment to Revise the Early Life Stages Implementation Provision of the Freshwater Ammonia Objectives
<b>2. Lead agency name and address:</b> California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Los Angeles Region 320 West 4th Street, Suite 200 Los Angeles, CA 90013
<b>3. Contact person &amp; phone number:</b> Deborah Neiter California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Los Angeles Region 320 West 4th Street, Suite 200 Los Angeles, CA 90013 (213) 576-6763
<b>4. Project location:</b> Los Angeles Region
<b>5. Project sponsor's name and address:</b> Not applicable
<b>6. General plan designation:</b> Not applicable
<b>7. Zoning:</b> Not applicable
<b>8. Description of project:</b> Basin Plan Amendment to revise Chapter 3 "Water Quality Objectives" of the Basin Plan and, specifically, the implementation provision included as part of the freshwater ammonia objectives relative to the protection of Early Life Stages (ELS) of fish in inland surface waters. The ELS provision relaxes the 30-day average objective at low ambient temperatures (<59 degrees F or <15 degrees C) when ELS are not present. Where ELS are considered present at temperatures less than 15 degrees Celsius more stringent ammonia objectives are required. The current Basin Plan contains ammonia objectives to protect ELS of fish in inland surface waters by using the beneficial use "SPWN" as a proxy for ELS present waters. This amendment to the freshwater ammonia objectives revises the current approach of using the beneficial use designation "SPWN" as a proxy and instead relies on knowledge of where fish reproduction occurs in the LA Region at temperatures below 15 degrees C in tandem with knowledge of the physical conditions that may preclude reproduction and early development in significant numbers in certain water bodies.
<b>9. Surrounding land uses and setting:</b> Los Angeles Region
<b>10. Other public agencies whose approval is required (e.g., permits, financing approval, or participation agreement.)</b> State Water Resources Control Board, Office of Administrative Law.

**ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:**

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a ‘Potentially Significant Impact’ as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

- Aesthetics
- Biological Resources
- Hazards & Hazardous Materials
- Mineral Resources
- Public Services
- Utilities/Service Systems
- Agriculture Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Hydrology/Water Quality
- Noise
- Recreation
- Mandatory Findings of Significance
- Air Quality
- Geology/Soils
- Land Use/Planning
- Population/Housing
- Transportation/Traffic

**DETERMINATION:**

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

X I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a **NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be prepared.

- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A **MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be prepared.
- I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT** is required.
- I find that the proposed project MAY have a ‘potentially significant impact’ or ‘potentially significant unless mitigated’ impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT** is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or **NEGATIVE DECLARATION** pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or **NEGATIVE DECLARATION**, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

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Jonathan Bishop, Executive Officer

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Dated

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 Early Life Stage Implementation Provision - Ammonia Objectives  
 September 21, 2005

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant	No Impact
<b>I. AESTHETICS</b> – Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?				X
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?				X
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?				X
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?				X
<b>II. AGRICULTURE RESOURCES:</b> In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. Would the project:				
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?				X
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?				X
c) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use?				X
<b>III. AIR QUALITY</b> – Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?				X
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?				X

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c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non- attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?				X
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?				X
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?				X
<b>IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES – Would the project:</b>				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?			X	
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?				X
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?				X
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?			X	
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?				X
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?				X
<b>V. CULTURAL RESOURCES – Would the project:</b>				

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a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in CEQA Guidelines section 15064.5?				X
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15064.5?				X
c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?				X
d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?				X
<b>VI. GEOLOGY AND SOILS – Would the project:</b>				
a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				X
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.				X
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?				X
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?				X
iv) Landslides?				X
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?				X
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?				X
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18- 1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?				X
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?				X
<b>VII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS – Would the project:</b>				

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a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?				X
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?				X
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?				X
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?				X
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?				X
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?				X
g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?				X
h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?				X
<b>VIII. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY –</b> Would the project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?				X
b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?				X

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c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?				X
d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?				X
e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?				X
f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?				X
g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?				X
h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?				X
i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?				X
j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?				X
<b>IX. LAND USE AND PLANNING – Would the project:</b>				
a) Physically divide an established community?				X
b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?				X
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?				X
<b>X. MINERAL RESOURCES – Would the project:</b>				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?				X

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b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?				X
<b>XI. NOISE</b> – Would the project result in:				
a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?				X
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?				X
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?				X
d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?				X
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?				X
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?				X
<b>XII. POPULATION AND HOUSING</b> – Would the project:				
a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?				X
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				X
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				X

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<b>XIII. PUBLIC SERVICES</b>				
a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				X
Fire protection?				X
Police protection?				X
Schools?				X
Parks?				X
Other public facilities?				X
<b>XIV. RECREATION –</b>				
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?				X
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?				X
<b>XV. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC – Would the project:</b>				
a) Cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?				X
b) Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?				X
c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?				X

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d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?				X
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?				X
f) Result in inadequate parking capacity?				X
g) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?				X
<b>XVI. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS –</b> Would the project:				
a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?				X
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?				X
c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?				X
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?				X
e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?				X
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?				X
g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?				X
<b>XVII. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE –</b>				

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	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant	No Impact
a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?			X	
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?				X
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?				X

Expand on all answers given to the preceding questions in regard to environmental impacts, except for where "No Impact" is determined. The evaluation shall consider whether the environmental impact indicated will have a substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the activity. In addition, the evaluation should discuss environmental effects in proportion to their severity and probability of occurrence.

**IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES. WILL THE PROPOSAL RESULT IN:**

- a) Have a substantial adverse effect (either directly or through habitat modifications) on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service? Less than significant.

There are only 4 water bodies that will be subject to less stringent objectives due to this Basin Plan amendment. These are:

- Canada Larga (402.10) - Ventura Watershed
- Conejo Creek (403.63) - Calleguas-Conejo Watershed
- Ballona Creek to Estuary (405.13) – Ballona Creek Watershed
- Los Angeles River to Estuary (405.12) - Los Angeles River Watershed

Overall, the amendment will result in applying the more stringent "ELS present" objective at temperatures below 15 C to 298 out of 336 listed water bodies in the Los Angeles region. The existing condition is that 104 out of 336 water bodies have the more stringent ELS present objectives at temperatures below 15 C. This is almost a three-fold increase in the number of water bodies protected by the more stringent objectives. Therefore, we expect the impacts of this Basin Plan amendment on candidate, sensitive, or special status species to be minimal, if any.

Among the four water bodies mentioned above, the Los Angeles River to Estuary (405.12) has the beneficial use of RARE in our Basin Plan indicating that it has at least one rare, threatened or endangered species. The other three water bodies do not have the RARE designation. However, the Basin Plan amendment is designed to be protective of the most sensitive aquatic species [in this case, early life stages of fish]. Local expert knowledge and literature on historical and current fish species distributions in southern California were relied upon to ensure that the proposed water quality standards for ammonia will be protective of all fish species currently present or present at any time since 1975.

- d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites? Less than significant.

This amendment will not require the construction of any structures that would interfere with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors. However, in the case of 4 water bodies mentioned above, the amendment will result in less stringent or more relaxed objectives in comparison to what is required under existing conditions. These four water bodies are Canada Larga (402.10), Conejo Creek (403.63), Ballona Creek to Estuary (405.13), and Los Angeles River to Estuary (405.12).

However, these water bodies were specifically exempted from the more stringent objectives set to protect ELS at low ambient temperatures (< 15 C) along with 34 other water bodies because of at least one of the following two factors:

1. It was determined that there are not fish reproducing at temperatures below 15 degrees Celsius in these water bodies.
2. It was determined that the physical conditions of the water bodies could not support a viable nursery (due to habitat alteration, like concrete lining of the channel bottom).

Therefore, this Basin Plan amendment should not result in significant impairments of fish nurseries because this amendment will only result in more relaxed objectives for four water bodies. Furthermore, these four water bodies do not have significant, if any, fish reproduction and early development at low temperatures —the condition under which the less stringent objectives would apply.